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L12: Entry 69 of 102

File: USPT

Jul 23, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6424952 B1

TITLE: Method of providing means to pay for total future educational expenses to attend an institution of higher learning

Abstract Text (1):

A method and system for financing expected future educational expenses. The method includes the basic steps of determining current educational expenses, reviewing past changes in educational expenses, calculating future educational expenses based on current educational expenses, past changes in educational expenses and assumptions on annual increase rates of educational expenses, establishing a target for future total investment payout based on calculated total future educational expenses and assumptions on expected investment yields, and deriving present investment amount needed to provide future educational expenses. Payment of the investment amounts are collected for investment of future payment of educational expenses. Additional insurance policies are purchased to providing cushion money to cover investment short fall and guarantee the payment for future education expenses. The system that implements the present invention method utilizes a computer network such as the Internet for establishing and maintaining a web site which provides on-line enrollment of the service and direct payment links as well as continued educational counseling.

Brief Summary Text (2):

The present invention generally relates to the field of financial services related to educational expenses. More particularly, the present invention relates to the field of providing higher education related financial services aided by computer networks such as the Internet.

Brief Summary Text (11):

It is another object of the present invention to provide a method and system for providing on-line assistance for educational funding and counseling services by utilizing a computer network such as the Internet. Described generally, the present invention is a method and system for financing expected future educational expenses. The method includes the basic steps of determining current educational expenses, reviewing past changes in educational expenses, calculating future educational expenses based on current educational expenses, past changes in educational expenses and assumptions on annual increase rates of educational expenses, establishing a target for future investment return based on calculated actuarial future educational expenses and assumptions on expected investment yields, and deriving present investment amounts needed to provide future educational expenses. Payment of the investment amounts are collected for investment of future payment of educational expenses. Additional insurance policies are purchased to providing cushion money to cover investment short fall and guarantee the payment for future educational expenses.

Drawing Description Text (4):

FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram showing a preferred embodiment of the present invention system for financing expected future educational expenses utilizing the Internet.

Detailed Description Text (20):

Referring to FIG. 2, there is shown a schematic block diagram showing a preferred embodiment of the present invention system for financing expected future educational expenses, providing on-line assistance for educational funding and counseling by utilizing a computer network such as the Internet. The preferred embodiment of the present invention system 10 as shown in FIG. 2 includes a computer 20 used by the administrator of the present invention system, a local or a remote file server 30 for establishing and maintaining a web site 40 on the Internet 50. If it is local server, than it may be the same administrator computer 20. The web site is accessible by consumers through their computers 60 connected to the Internet 50, and linked to other important web sites, including web sites 70 of the universities and colleges, web sites 80 of the financial institutions, web sites 90 of insurance companies, web sites 100 of other educational related products or services, and web site 110 of other general products or services providers.

Detailed Description Text (21):

The web site 40 may be used for introducing and providing the educational funding and counseling services of the present invention method. Referring to FIGS. 2 and 3 together, an interested customer may be enrolled on-line by filling out an application and related contract. The administrator of the present invention system may conduct on-line administration of the customers' on-line activities, conduct calculations of the present value of future educational costs based on the information and selection provided by the customer.

Detailed Description Text (23):

The result of the calculation may be delivered back to the customer via the Internet 50. After enrollment and receiving the result of the calculation, the customer may make payment to a financial institution via direct link to the financial institution's web site 80, which link may be provided by the present invention web site 40. When a child in the customer family is ready to attend college or university of his or her choice, the child or his or her guardian instructs the financial institution as to which educational institution the child has selected and then the financial institution will make direct payment to the educational institution. If the child dies before reaching college age or the child decides not to attend college for whatever reason, the family may choose to surrender the contract or policy and receive a lump sum payment. If the child chooses a less expensive college than the benchmark, the child can have the excess money in account for future higher education or take a payout of the difference between the benchmark and the actual payment to the college. However, during the years in between, on-line counseling is provided continuously.

Detailed Description Text (28):

Alternatively defined, the present invention is an apparatus for financing expected future educational expenses, comprising: (a) an educational financial and counseling service web site established on the Internet for collecting information from a customer regarding a child's present age and desired educational institution; (b) means for calculating present investment amount needed to provide future educational expenses, based on total future educational expenses and future total investment payout; and (c) means for delivering results of the calculation to the customer.

CLAIMS:

3. The method as defined in claim 2, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for on-line collection of said information.
4. The method as defined in claim 2, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for delivering the result of said calculation to said customer.
6. The method as defined in claim 5, further comprising the step of utilizing a

computer network for assisting on-line payment of said present investment amount via links to a financial institution's computer.

7. The method as defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for assisting on-line purchase of said insurance policy via links to an insurance company's computer.

9. The method as defined in claim 8, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for providing said continued educational counseling.

14. The method as defined in claim 13, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for on-line collection of said information.

15. The method as defined in claim 13, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for delivering the result of said calculation to said customer.

16. The method as defined in claim 10, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for assisting on-line payment of said present investment amount.

18. The method as defined in claim 17, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for providing said continued educational counseling.

19. A method implemented by a provider for providing to a customer means to pay for total future educational expenses to enable the customer's beneficiary to attend any institution of higher learning, said method implemented by said provider comprising the steps of: a. providing an educational financial and counseling service web site/portal established on the Internet for collecting information from a customer regarding a child's present age and desired educational institution; b. establishing said web site/portal to include a computer accessible via the Internet by said customer, a database for storing said information collected from said customer as well as information collected on current educational expenses and past changes in educational expenses, and a program executed by said computer for calculating present investment amount needed to provide future educational expenses, based on total future educational expenses and future total investment payout, and also based on current educational expenses, past changes in educational expenses, assumptions on annual increase rates of educational expenses and assumptions on expected investment yields; c. providing means for delivering results of said calculation to said customer; and d. providing means to produce a guaranteed payout at a future date to assure financial ability to pay for total future educational expenses to attend any institution of higher learning.

20. The method as defined in claim 19, further comprising the step of providing means for collecting on-line payment of said present investment amount from said customer.

23. The method as defined in claim 22, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for on-line collection of said information.

24. The method as defined in claim 22, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for delivering the result of said calculation to said customer.

26. The method as defined in claim 25, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for assisting on-line payment of said present investment amount via links to a financial institution's computer.

28. The method as defined in claim 27, further comprising the step of utilizing a computer network for assisting on-line purchase of said insurance policy via links to an insurance company's computer.

30. The method as defined in claim 29, further comprising the step of utilizing a

computer network for providing said continued educational counseling.

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